

***Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Federal Advisory Commission Meeting***

September 18, 2014

Middletown Town Hall
7875 Church Street
Middletown, Virginia

- 1) General Introductions
Jim Northup
- 2) Election of Officers
Jim Northup
- 3) Adoption of Minutes
Chair
- 4) Status of FAC Member/Nomination Process
Jim Northup
- 5) Update—Summer Programs
Amy Bracewell
- 6) Shared Graphic Identity
Amy Bracewell
- 7) Update—Planning/Development of Park Trails
Amy Bracewell
- 8) Update—150th Anniversary Planning
Amy Bracewell
- 9) Recognition for Congressman Wolf
Amy Bracewell
- 10) Cooperative Agreements
Amy Bracewell
- 11) Wayside Planning
Amy Bracewell
- 12) Beyond the 150th
Jim Northup

13) New Business

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, Belle Grove, Inc.; Carl Bernhards, Middletown; Dave Blount, Private Landowner; Amy Bracewell, NPS; Katie Donahue, USFS; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF); Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Lee Meyer, Warren County; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF); Richard Redmon, Strasburg; and Pam Salokangas, Shenandoah County.

Commission members absent: Jeanne Frink, Commonwealth of Virginia

Others in attendance: John Blaisdell, chair, Middletown Planning Commission; Paul Coussan, Civil War Trust; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Kristen Laise, Belle Grove, Inc.; Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf; Betty Strosnider, Middletown resident; Harold Strosnider, Middletown resident

Jim Northup opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m., and asked that since the commission had two new members that everyone give a more thorough introduction than simply a name and affiliation. Once introductions were complete Northup opened the floor for nominations for chair and vice-chair. John Adamson was nominated for chair and Eric Lawrence and Rob Nieweg for vice chair. Nieweg withdrew his name. Since no other candidates were put forward Adamson and Lawrence were approved unanimously

The meeting notes from June 19, 2014, were approved.

Jim Northup stated that although almost all commission vacancies were filled, he wished to raise the issue of someone who might represent a Citizens' Interest Group. Such a person had not yet been a member of the commission, but the park legislation did provide for such a representative. He asked the present commission members to think who that might be. Perhaps the Civil War Trust would be such a group?

Amy Bracewell gave a summary of the past summer's programs that had been quite successful. More than one hundred students had gone through the junior program that is running well. Most ranger talks and programs have centered on the 150th commemoration with a number of off-site programs at Cool Spring, Rutherford's Farm, Kernstown, Harpers Ferry, Fisher's Hill, Monocacy, Tom's Brook, and 3rd Winchester. The history at sunset programs have been well attended. Overall visitation has been steady with slightly greater numbers than last year. Two seasonals returned and two new ones have been hired. The visitor contact station will go on a winter schedule in November.

The initial designs for the shared graphic identity have been reviewed and critiqued by the partners. All are in agreement that the project is moving in the correct direction, but more refinement is needed.

A park trail meeting took place July 31, going through the final draft of the trail management document. Ursula Lemanski will continue to work with the park on the planning for a second year. The trail to the Vermont monument is complete. In November the Shenandoah National Park trail crew will be coming to clear and work on the entrenchment trail on Belle Grove property.

Work on the 150th Anniversary is coming down to the wire. Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation and Belle Grove have the shared ticketing worked out and tickets are for sale on the website. The opportunities to participate in and learn about the events 150 years is balanced between free and paid events, with something for everyone's tastes and interests. The commemorative guide is at the printer and will be available in October. The Frederick County Sheriff's Office is involved in traffic control. The lecture series continues to be well received, ads for the events have been placed as well as other notices, C-SPAN will provide some coverage, a special passport stamp will be available for the weekend, and a special ceremony will be held in the field in front of Belle Grove at 5 p.m. on Saturday. The work on the Ramseur monument is on schedule and will be completed in time for the October 20 rededication. On October 17 Belle Grove will be closed to the public, but will be open to free public school tours for fourth and fifth graders; 750 students have signed up. The weekend promises to be spectacular.

Representative Frank Wolf will not be able to attend the 150th ceremonies, but Shenandoah University is putting together an event where all organization from the northern valley can honor him for his service to the area over the years.

Bracewell has begun discussions with the partners on cooperative agreements. She has started talking with Belle Grove and the National Trust, but will talk to each partner in turn. The talks are only in the beginning stages.

The park has received project funding for wayside planning and will be working with Harpers Ferry Center. Two plans will emerge from the process: one will be for roadside and directional signs as well as trailhead signage. The second will be interpretive signs. The work will begin in November and go through September 2015.

Northup told the commission members that once the 150th commemorations are behind us, we need to be focusing on the future. Just what will that be? A permanent visitor center? More trails? Viewshed protection? Other aspects of the area's history? Other thoughts? He suggested that everyone review the GMP and reread the park's legislation.

Old Business

None

New Business

For the 150th anniversary of Third Winchester, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation will conduct real-time tours of the battlefield. More than 150 descendants of men who fought here had registered for the event. Kevin Walker, the new executive director of the SVBF, has done a lot of work preparing the land for this weekend's events.

Bracewell complimented everyone for the work that has been done.

The next meeting will be at the Warren County Government Center, December 18, 2014, at 9 a.m.

John Adamson adjourned the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Handouts

Agenda

Meeting Notes for June 19, 2014

Federal Advisory Commission membership list